



Endangered Species

- The Endangered Species Act (ESA) became law in 1973 to protect against the permanent loss of plant and animal species and the ecological, cultural, scientific and other values they have for our nation's natural heritage.
- The ESA seeks to protect endangered and threatened species by formulating plans to recover these species to self-sustaining levels and by protecting habitat critical for their continued survival.
- The loss of species can have negative impacts to humans through disruption of the food chain, creating imbalances in natural cycles, loss of valuable and unique genetic material and other factors.
- Over 1,260 plant and animal species are listed as endangered or threatened through the ESA, 31 of those species exist in Colorado and four endangered fish species in the Colorado River system are causing the alternations to human use of water. They are the Colorado pikeminnow, razorback sucker, humpback chub and boneytail chub.
- A plan is in place to recover these fish through hatchery raising and reintroduction into the wild, protecting critical habitat, managing river flows to maintain beneficial conditions for fish reproduction and survival, controlling competing populations of non-native fish and reducing impacts from water diversion structures.
- The enlargement of Elkhead Reservoir in northwest Colorado is one example of a cooperative measure among a diverse group of agencies and interests to recover the fish while minimizing impacts to present and future human development of water resources.